

AP to support PPP model for farm sector growth

Our Bureau



AP Agriculture Minister P. Pulla Rao.

The Hindu

Visakhapatnam, Feb. 24:

Andhra Pradesh, with a strong agricultural base, provides a great investment opportunity for the private sector and the State Government will also encourage public-private partnership (PPP) model for the integrated development of the agricultural sector, according to AP Agriculture Minister P. Pulla Rao.

He was addressing the representatives of several agro processing companies and other companies at a conference here on Tuesday on the emerging investment opportunities in the farm sector in Andhra Pradesh. The minister said the Government would involve the farmers in the endeavour and they would also contribute to the project cost besides the Government and the private companies. He urged the companies to come up with concrete proposals and project reports and the State Government would extend all co-operation and provide all support.

K.V Raju, the principal scientist of the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad, spoke about the opportunities in Andhra Pradesh. He said one of the aims of the Government as well as the private companies should be to reduce the post-harvest losses to less than 10 per cent from the present 25-30 per cent in the farm sector. He spoke of the hub-and-spoke model of PPP in the sector as suitable for Andhra Pradesh's needs.

However, "it is imperative that the AP Government announce an integrated agri-business policy" before inviting the private companies to invest in the State, he said and added that ICRISAT was setting up pilot sites in all the 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh to provide technical support to farmers.

Vikram Bajaj, of Monsanto, spoke of the self-sustainable model of corn development the company proposed to take up in Anantapur and Kurnool districts in association with Srinivasa Hatcheries.

Tarak, the vice-president of Nuzvidu Seeds, said the company proposed to take up a project for high-density planting of cotton in the cotton belt of Andhra Pradesh to maximise the return for farmers. Such plantation would pave the way for greater mechanisation, he added. The company would also promote direct sowing of rice in some of the AP districts.

Kaustub Kulkarni, of John Deere, said his company would take up a project for mechanisation in cotton fields of Andhra Pradesh. S. Sundarajan, the CEO of Janani Foods Private Limited, said his company would like to introduce modified atmospheric packaging for processing of horticultural produce in the State. It would increase the shelf life of the produce threefold and enhance the return to the farmer on a substantial scale.

Aswathaman and Avinash, of the agri-business division of the ITC, said the company would introduce integrated crop management in growing chillies and it would increase the export potential of the crop, as Andhra Pradesh was the highest chilli producer in the country.

Suryachandra Rao, of Rallis India, spoke about the need for growing more pulses and the company's campaign in other states which it wanted to extend to Andhra Pradesh. Jayarami Reddy, of the Nagarjuna Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited, spoke about the company's campaign in eight districts of Andhra Pradesh to promote site-specific nutrient management to enhance farm productivity.

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